

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER XIII. DRAWING ON.

It was only two or three days before the marriage, when Katey found herself alone, as she had longed to be, to get time to think over the new life she was about to enter on. Peter had gone out on business—that is, "up to the Bar'ks;" Polly was gone to the band, resplendent in spirits and raiment; a new officer had arrived, who had signified his approbation and adoration in the most open manner, and the inconstant creature was laughing and blushing over those outrageous compliments which the bold military chevalier thinks he can pay to a handsome country-town girl. Katey, left alone, stole out gently, and, sad at heart, wandered out at the back of the house, up over a little stile, which led into green meadows, part of the demesne of Leadersfort. Indeed, every patch of grass about the place belonged to the great family, and, in a primitive fashion, the natives of the district strayed over it at pleasure. There were all manner of soft lanes and paths through woods, with some deer feeding, and a stray seat here and there put up, not by the present dynasty, but by the honest squire who preceded it. There was a great tree, one of those noble solitaires of a demesne which, whatever changes take place, still preserve their solemn and eremitical life, looking on with a grand contempt at the decay or grandeur of those who assume to be their owners. Under one of these disdainful old watchers Katey sat down, very sad, yet glad to be alone—still bewildered, and hardly able to persuade herself that she was not in a dream;

she who had lived so long, in the dull round of that little village, a prosy, uneventful life, and for whom, in these latter days, events had been hurrying on with the strangest precipitation. Then, too, came on the uneasy feeling that the step she was going to take, sanctioned, as she believed it was, by the holiest principle of devotion, might, after all, turn out to be doubtful, and even wicked. Was she bound, in the cause of affection to her family, thus to sacrifice herself, her feelings, her hopes, her life?—was not that life a trust given to her, not to be given away thus carelessly to others?

As she sat and looked across the swelling meadow of the park, she heard footsteps approaching, and in a moment saw Mr. Leader with his steward, or keeper, coming past her. Greatly confused, she half rose to go. Mr. Leader, no less "taken back," coloured and stopped, and then took off his hat.

As she went away, she heard him calling after her.

"Don't let me disturb you," he said, in a hesitating fashion; "it seems you will soon have nearly as good a right to be here as I myself. Your people have determined to carry this through in spite of us."

Katey hung down her head, overcome with shame and confusion. There was a good nature in his manner quite unexpected, and contrasting strongly with the contemptuous fashion with which she had been treated by the rest of the family. She tried to speak; her lips moved; she sank down on the seat again in a torrent of tears.

Mr. Leader was beside her in a moment. "My poor child," he said, "don't! Compose yourself. Surely I know this is no

fault of yours. For my own part, I have always thought it a pity to oppose it; for if you like one another—now, don't."

"Indeed, indeed, I am very wretched," said Katey; "if I only knew what to do! My poor father and family—I have promised—and Mrs. Leader was so cruel to him."

"Oh, as for your father, I don't know what to say. I am afraid he is not over-scrupulous. But it is very unfortunate. It is driving us out of this place. We are going away to-morrow; and as for poor Cecil, I fear he will be made the victim, as Mrs. Leader is determined to have the entail cut off."

"Yes, I know; I heard. But it is not that. I dare not go back now. I know what would be said then! I know what is thought of me, and what you think of me. But I accept it all. You need blame no one else but the scheming girl, who brought all this about."

"You, scheming! No, indeed, my poor child. But you must not be cast down, or take such an utterly gloomy view of the future. Now, sit down here, next to me. Now, don't—don't," as Katey was breaking into fresh hysterical sobs. "Things are not so bad. You see Mrs. Leader has peculiar views of her own about rank and getting up in the world, and I am afraid"—with a sigh—"sacrifices a little too much to them. Now I and my dear daughter care very little about that; all we ask is to be happy, and to have our walks and little enjoyments. And I declare I don't know if we didn't enjoy ourselves more in the little house in London, when I went to court every day. Now I confess to you, from the first day I saw you coming out of the church, I took a fancy to you, for I was sure you were gentle and amiable, and that we should get on together famously. But there's Mrs. Leader." And he shook his head sadly.

These were inexpressibly comforting words for Katey; the more comforting as they were unexpected. She took his hand and raised it to her lips.

"Heaven bless you for this!" she said.

"Of course, not a word to any one," he went on; "but I will make the best fight I can. You know, after a time it may all blow over; when there's no help for a thing, Mrs. Leader may think it best to make the best of it. I'll try and do what I can, and, as far as injuring poor Cecil's prospects, will stave it off as long as possible."

There was something very good natured, though, at the same time, something ludicrously helpless, in this candid confession of weakness. But when Mr. Leader rose to go away, and shaking her warmly by the hand bade her be of good cheer, looking round at the same time with great caution, Katey was inexpressibly cheered, and went home with a lighter heart.

The behaviour of the future bridegroom might, indeed, give her more cause for disturbance. Within these few days he had grown brusque and sulky, and, as we have mentioned—deeply injured. This demeanour the Doctor had carried off by deep commiseration for his "ailments." He was delicate, would require great care and nursing from Katey, &c.

It was on the very evening of this interview of Katey with Mr. Leader that young Leader came suddenly into the Doctor's house, noisily and violently asking to see its master.

"I must see him—just fetch him at once."

The Doctor emerged suddenly from his parlour.

"My dear boy, looking for me? Just step in here for a moment. There! what is it?"

"Here's a pretty thing! They're all gone away, every one of them, and left me here in the lurch! You said they'd give in at the end. But they haven't, and here am I sold, and done in every way!"

He was very excited, and the Doctor saw "with half an eye" how the case was to be handled.

"Well, let them go! It makes no difference to us. They'll come back fast enough."

"Yes, to make me a beggar. I won't have that. I didn't bargain for that. I am not called on to sacrifice myself in this way. You said it was all to be made square. But it's not fair that I should be taken in——"

The Doctor turned on him at once.

"Taken in, sir? Have I taken you in, sir?"

"N—no—I don't say that. Oh, it's no use going on that way with me; there's no one listening."

This was a case for blistering, as the Doctor would have said, or for surgery.

"No, you don't mean me, and you daren't. But you mean an inoffensive girl, that can't call you to account. That's manly—that's generous! The girl that you've betrayed—that you're dragging

down in contempt and servitude, and setting under the tyranny of your step-mother! Who wanted you here?" added the Doctor, going back to his old argument. "I vow I am ashamed that the noble rites of matrimony should be degraded by such a lath-and-plaster lover. You'd better leave this. Don't attempt to go into her presence until you've learned the rudiments of generosity and loyalty. Go after your family if you like—it's nothing to us. But if you're absent when you're due, look out. The fellow that was pulled into quarters by wild horses had nothing like what you'll catch! If I was to be hung by the neck till I was dead and buried, I'd have the blood of the fellow that slurred my child. Then, sir, a roasting demon with a flaming trident from the lower regions would be nothing to me. No go! Leave my house, sir, and don't attempt to set foot in it until you've repaired the insult you've done to her. Not a word. I won't listen to you, sir."

And the Doctor pointing sternly to the door, the young man, awed and panic-stricken, slunk away home. The Doctor was right: that "surgery" had the best effect.

CHAPTER XIV. THE WEDDING DAY.

At last here was the morning, and the solemnity to which everything had been made to lead with such labour and agitation. There had been little sleep the night before in the Doctor's mansion, every one being in a sort of troubled nightmare. This fevered morning was long remembered in the Findlater family, and, indeed, in the little town. The symbolism of the event was embodied in the nuptial greys, now secured for their proper office, with blue forehead-bands and white satin rosettes fluttering; and the Doctor was seen from an early hour, in a blue coat with gilt buttons and a white tie, "charging" about the town, backwards and forwards between the little inn and his house. Now dashing up to McIntyre's, and rushing in to fetch a flower; or now carrying off Miss Perkes, the head milliner of the establishment, sitting beside him; now up at the church, and followed by little boys: no wonder that he with the brouche and greys seemed to be the embodiment of the whole solemnity. Take all this display away, and the villagers would not have had a good idea of the importance and magnificence of what a Findlater wedding really was. Groups stood at the corners, and Lord Shipton's

peculiar vehicle, slightly burnished up, was seen in the inn-yard. His lordship had shown a disinclination to assist at the ceremony, fearful of committing himself with the powers at Leadersfort; but the Doctor was so sarcastic, not to say jeering, on this tergiversation, plainly hinting at the imaginary character of the business or appointment that interfered, that he found it difficult to refuse. Now that the family had gone away he felt it an easier task. The Doctor had exerted much the same pressure on other doubtful friends; but in truth worldly interest was on his side, and made for him, for every one considered that young Leader would in due course of time come to reign over the estate. And thus at the club were seen other visitors and guests in full gala uniform. As for the regiment, the good-natured Bouchier seemed to have placed all its resources at the disposal of the Doctor—orderlies, the officers, all were at his disposal. As a matter of course, Simmons, the regimental chef, had undertaken the entire management of the banquet, and "proud to do it," says the Doctor. Oh, exciting morning! delicious flurry! More than anywhere else inside the Doctor's mansion, where women were flying about, and up and down, rustling, and fluttering, and clustering round the idol of the hour—the agitated victim, for such she was—though, indeed, the excitement had happily banished all sense of sacrifice; she had not time, like many others in similar situations, who are offered on the altar of wealth, or old age, or gout, to realise the future, and who can only think of the immediate ordeal before them.

Polly, head bridesmaid, it must be said, was no very valuable aide-de-camp, thinking chiefly of her own charms and her own dress, and the effect on Captain Morgan, the new and daring admirer, who had told her in plain English yesterday, "at the band," that she was "too handsome to be thrown away on a country town." Though she was quite angry with him, she said, and wouldn't speak to him again, she was still dressing for him. Poor volatile Polly, she was gradually being educated in perhaps the worst of existing schools, a regiment, where she was rapidly learning familiarity, and faster losing delicacy.

The time was drawing on, and it only wanted an hour to the commencement of the solemnity; the Doctor was in his study giving his whiskers a curl, when Mr. Leader's confidential man, a shrewd and

cautious Scot, opened the door hastily, and closed it sharply.

"My God, sir," he says, "here's a business! Mr. Cecil's taken ill!"

"Ill!" cried the Doctor, literally jumping into the air, "what d'ye mean? By the powers——"

"Oh, stop," said the man, coolly, "it'll do you no good. I knew it would come to this, for he's been at it these three nights back."

"Not a word—not a word, for your life," said the Doctor, in real agitation; "you said nothing to those women—maids, and the rest? No, I'm sure you didn't! See, my dear man, here's some sovereigns for you—all I have now—look, go back quietly—whistling, if you can—speak to that infernal maid of ours, who'll be prying, and poking, and wondering what brought you. I'll follow after a decent second or two."

The man did as he was desired, and the Doctor, imprecating terribly on the whole family, and on "that vile woman," more of whose work this was, got his little "case" and some medicines into his pocket, and walked out whistling, with his hands under his coat-tails.

It was just what he had imagined. There, on the bed, was stretched the young man, exactly as he had been seized the first day he had seen him, his face stiff, stretched, and ghastly, froth on his mouth, his hands rigid. The servant bent over him and loosened his neckcloth. Instantly the Doctor came up to him, and, with an amazing promptitude, set to work.

"I'll bring him round, never fear," he said. "Leave him to me. Get me mustard, and brandy, and every fiery thing that's in the house. Now, above all, not a word for your bare life. I know the mountains they'll be making of it, and it's only a trifle after all. I'll pull him round." But when the Doctor was left alone, it was amazing with what vehemence, what frantic ardour, he went about his "phlogistic treatment." "Oh, powers of Moses, that it should have come to this! Oh, save us and deliver us! Was there ever anything to equal this?" How was it to end—what was to come of it? And here were the moments "slipping away as if they had been greased."

Meanwhile the process of decking Katey was going on, and nearly completed now. For her the minutes went by too speedily. At last she was ready: there was a deal of embracing over that completion, and never

did Katey look so lovely. The cry now was, where was Peter to attend her to the b'rrouche, whose "head" was to be put up to carry them to church. Already scouts had reported that Lord Shipton had passed by in his peculiar vehicle, and wearing a new pair of yellow thread gloves.

In this flurry a letter was brought in directed to Katey, and the Mary or Jane who carried it said, with great elation, it was one of the people from the fort who had brought it over.

"Why, it's Mrs. Leader!" was the delighted cry. "Ah, Katey, love, she's given way, and it's to congratulate, and she's coming to the wedding!"

It was torn open and read. But it was not to the anticipated effect. It ran:

I wish to give you one last warning, and beg of you to pause before you take an irrevocable step. I tell you you shall never force your way into our family. You may marry Mr. Leader's son, but you shall marry a pauper. Depend upon it, I will find means to punish and to crush you for daring to interfere with our plans. As you choose to degrade our family by forcing your low connexions on us, remember I warn you that there shall be no mock repentance or "making up" after awhile. You shall pay bitterly for what you have done—taking in, with the low arts of your family, a poor, weak, helpless victim——

Katey turned pale as she read, and crushed the letter in her fingers. Then the colour came back to her cheeks, the light to her eye.

"I do not deserve this," she said, proudly. "She is a cruel, wicked woman. Perhaps she may not crush me yet. Polly, not a word, dearest, to Peter. For your life, darling, no. It will only put him out."

But where was Peter? Ah, it was too bad of Peter to be keeping them in this way, says the vivacious Polly. But here was Peter hurrying up with an exhausted, worried, and a scared look.

"Here," he said, "time's up. Make as much haste as you can, and be off to the church. I'll follow you."

"Ah, Peter, what nonsense! Don't you know you're to take Katey?"

"Not a foot. And don't you bother me, now, if you don't want to drive me mad among you. No disputing, but be off."

There was a tone about this which "abolished argument," as he would have said. An admiring crowd was at the door,

and they saw the two girls and their mother get into the b'rouche and drive away triumphant. The Doctor, wistfully and impatiently huddling them in, hurried back to the bridegroom's house, at whose door was waiting a small brougham, lent by one of the officers.

CHAPTER XV. THE WEDDING.

THE church was crammed; the people standing on forms at the lower end, the galleries crowded, and in the foremost pews a number of the guests standing in lines. There was Lord Shipton in his new thread gloves and his swallow-tail coat, Colonel Bouchier, and many of his officers, in uniform, and Katey, all white and veiled, attended by her fair bridesmaids, kneeling. Twingles, the organist, was playing the Wedding March of the immortal Mendelssohn Bartholdy, while from the vestry door the face of the Rev. W. Webber would peer out anxiously to see if the rest of the party were coming. It was very odd. Many began to whisper and smile; Mrs. Leader was so clever; who knew but at this three-quarters past the eleventh hour!—the flutter and expectation increased. Polly's head, with flushed cheeks, was turned round to the door openly. But hark now to the sound of wheels—hark also to quick steps and shuffling upon the pavement.

Every head was turned as the Doctor hurried up, the bridegroom leaning heavily on his arm. But a bridegroom so ghastly, with such wild eyes, such sunken cheeks, such decrepit form, that it was not surprising that every one was amazed, and leaped to the conclusion that he was wretched and miserable, loathed the whole business, and but for the watchful custody of the Doctor, would have escaped. Out came Billy Webber promptly, and began. Katey, her eyes demurely on the ground, never saw the strange change in her lover, who was, indeed, in a sort of stupid trance all through, with staring eyes, his head dropping on his breast, the Doctor jogging him now and again. It was a strange ceremonial, as Mr. Webber gradually forged link after link of the firm chain that was to bind them. At last he had finished his task, riveted the last link, and our beautiful Katey was now MRS. CECIL LEADER of Leadersfort.

All the time "the best man"—a brother officer—had kept close to the chief actor, on the Doctor's advice, giving him a substantial as well as moral support. All

through he remained the same, scarcely articulating the answers; and then, when they adjourned into the vestry to sign the books, the Doctor clutched his arm painfully, and congratulating him noisily, stimulated him by a sharp whisper. People began to wonder and look strangely, but in a moment the Doctor had him in a little off-room, where, from a small bottle in his pocket, he administered something. Indeed, as the Doctor said later, it was wonderful that his own hair and whiskers did not turn grey from all that was on them. However, the happy pair were got into the b'rouche, the greys flew over the ground, and that sort of *saute qui pout*, from the church to the house, which at a wedding always sets in, now took place. What the hapless Katey thought of her new companion during that passage no one had time to ask her. Here was the crowd round the house, for whom such a wedding was a rare curiosity. They were now all hurrying back, the strange vehicle of Lord Shipton leading. What a day for that Findlater house! And here was actually the band of the regiment drawn up in a ring in the road, ready to play in a complimentary fashion during the banquet. The Doctor had grown to be immensely popular with the men, who looked on him almost as one of their own officers.

It was a bright sunny day. Long after the actors in it looked back, as we may suppose most actors of the kind do, through a sort of dreamy film that pervaded it—every one being in a manner glorified out of their usual daily prosiness. To Katey it seemed a vision; she hardly knew what was going on about her; she was handled, and dressed, and embraced by her female friends quite passively. Strange to say, she took no thought of her husband; she seemed almost scared at that image, and, perhaps, it was then that the first notion of the serious gravity of the step she had taken came back upon her.

The dining-room was crowded, and glittered with uniforms. Champagne was flying as if all the boys' "pop-guns" in England were at work. There was a general flushing of faces and chatter of tongues. Now Lord Shipton is on his feet with a toast, which he trusts he will be permitted to propose. His lordship becomes flowery, and almost amorous in his praise of Katey and her sister, and owns he had long since irretrievably lost his heart to one of these lovely girls. He was not in the least ashamed to own it; he gloried in it,

in fact. He grudged his friend, Mr. Cecil, such a prize, &c., and so on, in a kind of tedious rapture. Then came the Doctor's speech, marked by a certain tenderness and melting softness. His jewel, his "peril"—so he called her—was being taken from him. Not that he begrudged her to the man of her choice, but he warned that man of her choice, whom he loved as his son, and whom he would call his son now, that he must foster and cherish the treasure confided to him. He must enshrine it in a casket; let no cold frosts or biting winds come next or nigh it; take it out into the balmy sun, and expose it to the soft breezes of summer. It was not for him to make allusions, but it was a matter of notoriety that certain influences had been at work, certain stories put in circulation d'rogatory to him and to those nearest and dearest to him. Influences that had been digging, and mining, and countermining—well, he was not going to rake up the past. There he was himself, and those he loved dearer than his heart's blood, a standing refutation of all that had been said, done, or attempted.

All this time, bride and bridegroom had been sitting together, according to precedent, he still looking strangely up and down the table, scarcely speaking. It was pronounced very odd, very queer, and mysterious. It was strange, when being got to understand that he must stand up and say something in reply to this drinking of his health. The Doctor's eyes glanced at him nervously and anxiously. He glanced round him still more wildly, and it was only when Katey's gentle voice encouraged him that he stood up, and, in a faint, faltering voice, said he was obliged to them all, did not feel very well that morning, and they must excuse him; then sat down. The Doctor drew a sigh of relief, and was presently behind him whispering, filled out something from a little decanter, and made him swallow it.

All this seemed very strange indeed, and the good-natured Lord Shipton described it all at the club with exaggeration. "It really looked as if they had braced him up, just to get through, you know."

"Get through!" said Mr. Ridley. "Why he's drugged the unfortunate lad!"

What was Katey thinking of all this while? Did any doubts cross her mind? Not one. To the last she was to have that marvellous faith in Peter, her own father. She had not time to think or doubt. Here was the party all breaking up: cake being cut with mystic ceremonies; the greys at

the door again; trunks coming down; and the band braying away outside. The Doctor had been out among them with bottles and glasses, stimulating them rather too much with that wonderful spirit he received from the west coast of Ireland, assuring them rather indiscreetly "that the Queen should never hear a word of it." Above, Katey was in the hands of her maidens and friends robing her for travel. There was a crowd in the street. Now they were coming down. Cecil Leader, Esquire, comes out of his parlour, where he has been closeted with the Doctor, now quite excited, his eyes dancing in his head, the Doctor's arm affectionately about him. They were all crowding down the stairs to see them off. Colonel Bouchier has half a dozen old shoes ready. The Doctor takes his daughter and whispers to her hurriedly:

"My pet of pets, our darling is a little upset by the day's proceedings; so when y'arrive just give him this quieting medicine, and he'll be all right. Maybe I'll look in in a day or two."

There is embracing, kissing, hugging. They have got in. A crack of the whip and plunging of horses' feet; away they go; a shower of old shoes. Faces look after them eagerly and affectionately as the carriage turns the corner. Then the Doctor turns abruptly into his study, as if quite overcome with his parental feelings, and there, when the door was closed, his face sank inwards, as though the springs had suddenly been relaxed, and he collapsed, as it were, in his chair, uttering a long and deeply-sustained groan.

"Chief Justice in glory!" he exclaimed at last, "may Katey, my child, be forgiven for all this. All I have gone through this morning was enough to wear my heart out. And the work's only beginning now!"

THE ITALIAN PEASANT

THE condition of the Italian peasant is in some respects worse, and in many respects better, than that of his English brother. He has a better soil and a better climate, to begin with; fewer wants, and a greater capacity for enjoying life. He is often a poor man, but seldom a pauper, in the legal sense of the word. His appearance in England and elsewhere as an organ-grinder is not a result of poverty, but of a desire to escape from the conscription, or to elude the laws of his native country, which are very severe in certain cases,

though much milder than they were a few years ago. Most of these vagabonds have run away from home, leaving behind them parents or families who are respectable; or, if young, have been sold or "farmed out" to master organ-grinders, with or without their parents' consent, at so much a head, or in gangs of six or eight, like convicts. It is quite a mistake to suppose that these wanderers are the outpourings of the Italian streets. They are generally vagrants and beggars—perhaps criminals—because they have come to England. In their own country they have the means of subsistence.

Many of the organ-grinders of London are peasants from the mountain districts of Italy. They speak a language of their own—a patois made up of the waifs and strays of various dialects—a kind of Babel of sounds which would be unintelligible in the cities and large towns of their native land. Most of the image-men are Tuscans, or inhabitants of Lucca and Modena. The hurdy-gurdy boys are Savoyards and Piedmontese. The pifferari, or Italian pipers, some of whom have bagpipes like the Scotch Highlanders, are Sicilians and Calabresi; but in some rare instances a Roman or a Tuscan minstrel is to be found in the streets of London dancing a jig or singing a plaintive song in pure Italian. Most of these adventurers live and vegetate in the dark courts and alleys of Clerkenwell and Soho-square—haunts of vice and misery, where Italy may look for her exiled children any day in the year, and claim them, too, if she have a mind (which she has not), together with all the organ-grinders or others who infest the metropolis. One and all are peasants, or relatives and friends of peasants; people who began life as farmers or farm-servants—landlords of wretched hovels—landed proprietors of fields and cabbage gardens.

The peasantry of Italy may be divided into two great classes: the *contadini* and the *paesani*, or the upper and lower classes of peasants. The cultivators of the soil are an independent race. They are the fellow-labourers of the ox, but they are not ploughmen or peasants in the English sense of the word. They associate with dogs, horses, and sheep; but they are their own masters. They are the children of Nature. They call themselves the citizens of the woods. They are proud and ignorant at the same time. They have a flower's right to grow on their native heath, a lark's privilege to sing in the

fields. They are as much a part of the landscape as the trees themselves. Their defect is that they take root. You may cut them down, or they will die in their places, as their fathers did before them; but you cannot induce them to leave the country, unless it be for criminal or political reasons.

Let us take a glance at the English peasant, and compare his qualities—good, bad, or indifferent—with those of the Italian *contadino*.

We all know the defects of the English swain; how rude he is, how unwieldy, how unable to compete with mechanics in the race for wealth. In nine cases out of ten he is a mere drudge, a thing and not a man, part of the machinery of a farm-house; in some cases a pauper, and in others a slave—if people can be called slaves who have the right to die of starvation and the liberty to go to the workhouse! But, in spite of his defects, and the defects of his position, he is a more substantial being than his Italian prototype. He has greater powers of endurance, and he endures with a better grace. He is thankful for small mercies; he works and plays with a will; and he starves in a good-humoured sort of way, as if he thought his time were come. But send him abroad, put him on his own land in a new country, give him in Australia or America the chances which an Italian peasant has at home, and ten to one he will prosper, and bring about, or help to bring about, the prosperity of others. For the English working-man is never more at home than when he is abroad. He knows that he is a man as well as an Englishman; an inhabitant of the earth, not of a part of it; a native of the land on whose possessions the sun never sets. Not so the Italian peasant. For him Italy is everything, the world nothing. If he transplants himself, he languishes. He knows no history but the history of Rome, no sun but that which shines on his father's fields. He likes money well enough, but he would rather live on a crust of bread or chestnut flour in his own land (chestnut porridge is the great staple of food in Central Italy) than live on milk and honey in a foreign clime. He owns, or partly owns, the field he cultivates. He is never very rich, and never utterly destitute. He may send his wife and children out to beg, or become a beggar himself when work is slack and the winter harvest—that of the chestnut-tree—has been gathered in, but he has always a roof to cover him, a household fire from which no landlord can expel him, a hut

which he has inherited with his name, and which is as much a part of his identity as the snail's shell is a part of its body.

The contadini of the North of Italy make, as a rule, very good farmers. They are more industrious than the peasants of Naples, and better educated than the men who work in the fields and vineyards of Tuscany; but they are not so refined as the latter, and they speak Italian as people speak a language they have acquired by study. To them the *lingua Toscana*—the national speech of Italy—is a foreign tongue. They learn it—they do not inherit it; they are Italy's foster-children. Thus it comes to pass that they are obliged to become scholars, or at least the pupils of a schoolmaster, before they can put themselves into communication with the authorities. Their local speech is not recognised by the law. Sermons are preached, proclamations are issued, lawsuits are carried on, in a language which is as strange to them as the English language used to be to the inhabitants of the interior of Wales. Nor is this the case solely with the peasantry; the middle and even the upper classes are sadly at a loss sometimes to express themselves in proper language, so that they are often compelled to speak a foreign tongue (say French or German), in order to make themselves understood in polite society. French is becoming quite the rage in Lombardy and Venetia, where ladies and gentlemen of good position do not scruple to speak bad French in preference to good Italian; perhaps because they fear the provincial accent will slip out! I have said that the peasants of the North of Italy speak patois; but when they read and write (as they often do) they read and write Italian, and not Piedmontese, or *lingua Lombarda*. This is the sense in which the northern peasantry are better educated than those of the midland provinces, though, according to all accounts, they are less nobly gifted by Nature, and spring from "barbarians," and not from the ancient Romans: some say from the Goths and Vandals. The peasants of Tuscany pride themselves on having a gentler pedigree. Their patois is the language of scholars. Dante wrote in it, Galileo thought in it, Italy is being governed by it at the present day. The shepherd-boy who tends his flocks on the mountains of the Val d'Arno, and knows nothing of books except that they have been forbidden by the priest, talks more correctly and pronounces his words better than the average

Lombard gentleman. He can improvise poetry, or, I should say, poetical phrases, better than a lawyer can defend his client, or a doctor talk to his sick man, in many of the northern towns. Nay, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the lower classes of Tuscany are born in the purple of literature, just as the birds of the forest are born songsters. They talk correctly as the fish swims properly; as fire burns with a due regard to the rules of chemistry without knowing them; as leaves fall to the ground in obedience to the law of gravitation. You may find peasants and charcoal-burners in the midland provinces of Italy whose knowledge of the *Divine Comedy* and the *Two Orlando* (*Orlando Furioso* and *Orlando Innamorato*) is as profound as that of an Italian litterato; nay, it may be, profounder, for while the latter has often a large library to fall back upon, the peasant is confined to his ancient epics: the books he has learnt by tradition, as a child learns fairy tales, by word of mouth and memory, and not by book or pen, though now and then his natural powers are eked out by a little learning. The majority of the peasants are, of course, ignorant of these chefs-d'œuvre, and those who can read by the card do not always read poetry: the *Reali di Francia*, the story of Bertoldo and Bertoldino (a kind of prose epic), and the legends and litanies of the saints, being among their favourite books.

The Italian peasantry contribute very largely to the military resources of the country. They supply the great bulk of the soldiers; they are the raw material which the Italian government employs to fight its battles and defend its frontiers; turning them in some cases into heroes, and in others into powder machines—warranted, gun in hand, to go off at a moment's notice. Do not let it be supposed, however, that these sons of the soil are exceptionally brave and warlike; that they take a particular delight in fighting, or in achieving military glory. They are simply poor (poor at least in ready money), and cannot buy themselves off from the government. If soldiering were a matter of choice, it is doubtful whether the king would receive as many recruits from the peasantry as would suffice to equip a single regiment. The contadini are a peaceful race: docile and patient to a fault; capable of great acts of self-denial, but not addicted to rebellion or to political or social risings, either in defence of a right or in revenge

for a wrong; a very different class of men to the peasantry of Kent and the bluff yeomanry of Yorkshire. The Italian contadini enter the army because they are obliged to do so. Every strong and hearty lad, whether he be peer or peasant, is liable to be claimed by the conscription as soon as he attains his nineteenth year, provided he be not maimed, or below the average height, or proved to be the only support and comfort of a widowed mother. Of course the peer is bought off from the rank and file; he is enabled to enter the army as an officer if he be so inclined, but once the fine paid he is exempt from the conscription, and the government must look elsewhere for his substitute. The peasantry are thus called into requisition twice over—once for themselves, and once for their fine-paying neighbours. But they reap many advantages from their forced service in the camp: they learn Italian; they become civilised; they go back to their native villages (at the age of twenty-five), with an acquired taste for books and letter-writing, and are looked upon as gentlemen—perhaps as heroes—by their old associates.

A considerable number of the non-readers in Italy are good story-tellers and reciters of ballads, and some of them make what is called poetry on their own account. This is particularly the case in the South and in some of the central provinces, where education of a practical kind has (until recently) been much neglected. Where schools flourish, home-philosophy, sometimes called mother-wit, is generally found to be on the decline. Old women lose their importance; old men look to their sons and daughters, and not to the priest, for instruction. No more peasants, brooding over the old classics, make a reputation as local poets; no more village sybils thunder forth anathemas in blank verse, or lull their children, or their children's children, to sleep with cradle-songs in seventy or eighty verses, interspersed with Litanies and Ave Marias. To find such customs now-a-days you must go to secluded spots, far away from the track of the schoolmaster; to romantic hills and valleys where the priest is still supreme; to villages suspended from the crags like eagles' nests, and supposed (but not proved) to have been built at the breaking up of the Roman empire by feudal chiefs, or robbers, who were making war on their sovereign. It would almost appear as if poetry of a certain class can-

not exist in an enlightened age. Ivy looks best on a ruin; ballads do not flourish in an age of newspapers. Perhaps it is because ballads, being in one sense an inferior kind of newspaper, are driven out of the market by the real article. Look at education, what it is doing in Italy; how it is breaking the soil (like a large steam plough), and preparing the country for a new harvest! But in removing the rubbish and obstructions which beset its path, it removes many beautiful things; not alone the weeds of ignorance and superstition, but the wild flowers of tradition and poetry. And these are the sights which one sees in Italy in this year of grace: the lazzaroni of Naples swept away, or forced to become honest members of society; the gondoliers of Venice reformed, and educated, and properly controlled by the authorities; the brigands of Calabria and the Roman States shot or imprisoned as convicts; the pifferari and wandering minstrels—poor peasants, with their wives and families, who used to sing so prettily at the wayside shrines and in front of the pictures of the Virgin Mary—sent to the reformatory or the workhouse. But it is impossible not to regret some of the old customs and traditions which are being destroyed along with these errors and abuses.

Tuscany and Lombardy, as well as Naples and the Roman States, contain many of the secluded spots above alluded to, "spots" composed of villages, and even small towns, where newspapers are unknown, books a forbidden rarity, and candles (tallow, wax, and composite) highly esteemed as articles of religion. The peasantry of these places are still in the sixteenth century. Every man, woman, and child places his and her conscience in the hands of the local priest. Soul money, or a tax on dead people, is levied, and paid with cheerfulness. Taxes are raised on sin, indulgences (or permission to sin) are bought and sold in secret, and people are taught that the wages of sin is not death, as stated in the Scriptures, but absolution and eternal life. The fact is the Italian peasantry are the great bulwark of the Church of Rome. When these fall off the pope may begin to despair; but so long as these remain faithful—that is to say, as long as they remain ignorant and superstitious—there will be no prospect of a change of tactics on the part of the priesthood, either as regards soul-money for the dead, or sin-money for the living, or the worship of

graven images throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Among the most horrible of the superstitions of the peasantry, is the belief in the advocacy of little children—babies, who die as soon as they are baptised, or as soon after baptism as is consistent with a belief in their entire innocence and purity. Children who die young are called "advocates," or *avvocati*, because they are said to go to heaven without passing into purgatory, and plead for their parents and relations at the right hand of God. Many old women (chiefly grandmothers), and not a few fathers and mothers, have been convicted of compassing the deaths of children, not wickedly or maliciously, but in a pious, God-fearing sort of way, in order to have "friends in heaven" when their time comes. Do not suppose that they murder the children. Nothing of the sort. They simply let them alone and keep the doctor at a distance. If they are ill they say the hand of God is upon them. If friends interpose, and insist on something being done, they mutter a Latin prayer, and resign themselves to what they are pleased to call the "wishes of the Almighty." I have known cases where mothers have prayed that their innocent little children might die during illness, and cried bitterly when the coffin was being carried out of doors. But such cases are not frequent.

The peasantry of Lombardy and Venetia are more prosperous than those of Central Italy. At any rate, they eat and drink more copiously, and are able to afford themselves greater luxuries. They earn more, and they spend more than their southern brothers, and their food is not always coarse and unpalatable. Thus, in the central districts, among the hills of Tuscany, Lucca, and Modena, the *contadini* eat nothing but *necce* and *polenta*, which are the Italian names for chestnut bread and chestnut porridge. A little salt, a great deal of water, and a few handfuls of chestnut flour thrown into a large caldron (suspended from the inside of the chimney by a chain with a hook to it), form the ingredients of their morning meal. The same mixture, cooked in a different way—baked between two bricks, or rolled up (and boiled) in a towel, like a plum-pudding—serves for a dinner, and provides (in the shape of leavings) for a supper later in the day. The peasantry of the Tuscan Alps rarely, if ever, eat meat, except on Sundays and the holidays of the Church. Eggs and milk are luxuries, because the

poor like to sell them to the rich, and a loaf is considered quite a treat by the children of the peasantry; nay, it is one about which many hard-working people know nothing at all except by hearsay. This state of things would be simply intolerable to the peasantry of the North of Italy. The northern *contadino* is accustomed to butcher's meat on six days in the week. On Friday, as in duty bound, he fasts; that is to say, he eats fish, and as much miscellaneous food as he likes, taking Friday's allowance of meat on Sundays between mass and vespers. The breakfast of the Lombard peasantry consists of porridge made of Indian corn, baker's bread, with cheese or butter, and other simple viands, which, in some cases, are accompanied by wine (home made, or bought from some neighbouring farm), to enable them to endure the fatigues of the field. The air is keener than in the South, and the men and women of Lombardy and Venetia, being harder and more industrious than the Italians of a softer clime, require more food to keep them alive.

In certain parts of Italy, principally in the midland provinces, the young men of the peasant classes "emigrate" for a few weeks or months in the beginning of winter, and repair to Corsica and Sardinia, and certain marsh lands on the Italian coast of the Mediterranean called *Maremmes*, where there is work to be done in the shape of draining fields, cutting down trees, making and transporting charcoal in the forest lands, and mayhap building bridges and roads. These "emigrants"—if they can be called by such a name—generally take their departure in the month of November, after the gathering of the chestnuts. The women and old men, and the well-to-do young men of the peasant classes, stay at home to superintend the smoking of the autumn fruit—the chestnuts being placed in a kind of loft, with holes in the floor, above the *metato*, or kitchen fire, which has no chimney or outlet of any kind except the window and door—and a kind of lull takes place in the active life of the peasants. The old women take to their distaffs; the younger women sew and knit, or resume their studies in embroidery and straw plaiting; while the young men aforesaid make a pretence of looking after the fields and forests, where a stray nymph or two is generally to be met with drying clothes, or picking up sticks for the kitchen fire. Winter is a season of comparative security for these young women, who in

summer rarely, if ever, venture out alone—not even a stone's throw from their father's house. The "roughs" are all away; the boisterous young men are hard at work in the marshes. A little friendly intercourse and homely affection is thus allowed to spring up between the youth of both sexes, who meet at the metato fires in the long winter evenings and tell stories and sing songs. When the spring returns the "emigrants" begin to make their appearance again—perhaps as early as the March violets—either one by one, or in batches of six or eight, as the case may be.

The peasantry of Italy are not much addicted to dancing, except in Carnival, and the priests denounce it as a peccato mortale, or deadly sin, when they have the chance. A village fête in most parts of Italy is a day on which there is nothing to do, when people walk about in their best clothes, eat and drink better than usual, and go to church three times instead of once: once to mass, once to vespers, and once to funzione in the evening.

The distinguishing features of a village "wake" in Italy—a harvest home, a vintage feast, or a veglione in the dead of winter—are eating and drinking, intermixed with singing (sacred and profane), and the offering up of prayers. Many lads of fifteen can rhyme and versify in the most surprising manner, now and then extorting praise (and money) from tourists, few of whom are, perhaps, aware that the improvvisatori of Italy are in the habit of using the same phrases over and over again, as people tell a Joe Miller, or a favourite pun, in different houses.

The Neapolitan peasants are, or used to be, quite famous for their extempore songs—many of them very elaborate—which they sang to their own music, like the wood-cutters of the South of France, alluded to by Madame Sand in her story of the Maitres Sonneurs. I have heard of Italian peasants who could write verses about their friends and acquaintances who were working in the fields, and sing them (instead of working themselves) in a clear, soft, theatrical voice. I have heard of other peasants (also Italian) who could play the flute or flageolet, and dance as nimbly as a ballet-man; and of others who could fence and play at chess. It will be said (not without reason) that these accomplishments are not likely to be of much use to a hard-working clodhopper; but a certain civilising or refining influence

may be attributed to them, just as boors are likely to be improved by being brought into the society of ladies.

PEACE AND WAR.

TWO AUTUMN LANDSCAPES.

I.

THIN yellow leaves are waving in the sun,
Thin red leaves tremble on the garden wall,
A cold dew beads upon the last pale rose,
That e'er another hour will shake and fall.
Gay past my window, heedless of next frost,
Flit the bright coloured wandering butterflies;
The stillness and the calm of Autumn time
Upon the changing misty woodland lies.
And on the yellowing bough of the ash-tree
The little robin with a ruddier breast
Sits singing now with heedless child's delight
Of Autumn's soothing hours of ease and rest.
Peace and Content, like children hand in hand,
Walk by the woodsides through the rustling leaves;
Nature seems dreaming of the golden age,
When joyous days but led to merrier eves.

II.

Another scene, and in another land,
A sullen sky of boding thundercloud,
That broods upon the long, long poplar rows,
And gathers hill by hill within its shroud.
Under the vineyard, torn in gaps with shot,
Nestles a cottage, once so trim and neat;
But now across the shattered smouldering floor
There are the crimson prints of trampling feet.
And by the riven wall that's in a flame,
There lies an old man, with his long grey hair
Steeped in his children's blood. 'Twas well he died
Before he saw red Murder riot there.
And in the distance through the sloping vines,
The bayonets glance, and one quick angry drum
Answers a calling bugle; and a horse,
Now riderless, flies fast from where the foemen come.

IN FLIGHT FROM PARIS.

GENERAL TROCHU'S announcement that the gates of Paris would be closed on Thursday, September the 15th, at six o'clock in the morning, and the warning of the British Embassy addressed to British subjects, informing them that if they prolonged their stay they did so at their own risk and peril, made such English as remained in Paris reflect a little seriously as to whether they had not better take their departure. To say the truth, there were not many of our countrymen still remaining. Faces of residents, to which one had become well accustomed, had been for some time missing. Just before and after the disaster of Sedan, the period of greatest panic of flight had set in, and produced sights not to be forgotten by those who witnessed the state of any of the railway stations of Paris during that period. A perfect avalanche of fugitives and their baggage fell down on all the termini of the lines leading to England or Belgium—it was, indeed, at every station, confusion

worse confounded. The sergens de ville having now disappeared from the scene, National Guards were posted at every entrance to the stations, and endeavoured, with fixed bayonets, to restore some sort of order amid the writhing, struggling masses who hustled together in desperate rivalry to reach the office for their ticket, and not only filled the station itself, but battled and wrestled on the steps and in the streets outside. Some, in order that they might fight with greater freedom, abandoned their baggage altogether, while others sat themselves down upon their boxes in the street, and waited with a calmness like despair for some abatement of the desperate conflict which was going on inside. A restaurateur in the Rue d'Amsterdam told me he had noticed a family sit in this fashion, perched on their boxes, for fifteen consecutive hours. At one time the press was so great that the companies refused to take any baggage at all; but the owners of baggage fled all the same, leaving it behind them like an army in rout. The wild heaps of boxes and portmanteaus of every dimension, every shade of trimness and shabbiness, which were stacked in all directions, were something hideous to behold; you walked between walls of baggage, and mountains of it rose beyond. Full half of it will never again find the owners, for there was a very general absence of addresses. In fact, each of the termini was for the space of a few days a very chaos of disordered baggage, around and about which struggled and jostled a panic-stricken crowd of gesticulating men, and haggard women, and crying children, fleeing from the coming Prussians. In the course of three or four days, however, the worst of the panic of flight was over, and the railway companies, who seemed for a while to be paralysed by the enormous amount of extra work thrown upon their lines, recovered themselves, luggage was again taken and labelled, and the stream of fugitives grew less and less, until the stations presented at last a more deserted appearance than usual. General Trochu's announcement, however, revived anew the impetus of flight; but as the more panic-stricken had already taken wing, the latter part of the exodus took place with greater quiet and regularity.

To a good number of the strangers who thus went off at the last hour, the question of going or staying was one of considerable difficulty to decide upon. We ourselves were not only influenced by the fear of finding an uninvited bedfellow in the form of a bombshell some night whizzing

and sputtering by our side, nor by the fear of street-fighting, and ultimate sack by the Prussians, nor by the fear of street-fighting with the Spectre Rouge and possible sack by the "Reds", whose appearance we have been taught to look for at every critical moment. Those who love Paris—and who does not love Paris who has resided there for a few years?—might possibly be willing to run the risk of a little danger, and even to take up the revolver and Chassepot to do her service in emergency; but how long was it going to last? The most ardent Parisians were looking forward to a siege of some two or three months, in which case one would surely find oneself cut off from all home communications. To the Parisian who has all his household gods, and goods, and means of subsistence within the walls of the city, this is a lighter matter than for a stranger, for whom the occasional postal deliveries and the receipt of remittances is a necessity: and as to remittances, how were they to be cashed? A friend of ours was going about the day before we left trying to get an English bank-note changed, and all in vain; so that it was possible you might find yourself with a goodly balance at your English bankers, and a neat packet of cheques and bank-notes in your desk, and yet be in danger of dying of starvation. The investment of so large a city as Paris must always have a weak spot in it, that is true; but who could tell whether your letters would have luck enough always to find out that weak spot, and to manage to get through? Regretfully, therefore, and with some sense of cowardice, we determined to turn our back for a while on the beautiful city. To see our friends once more, and to make some personal arrangements before submitting to a possible two or three months' siege, might surely be allowed us; for if the fates permitted, in three days' time we intended, assuredly, to be back again in our haunts, and among our old Parisian friends, prepared to give them such moral or other support as circumstances might require.

As we heard that the bridge over the Seine at Asnières was to be blown up punctually at eight P.M. on Wednesday evening, by the order of the omnipotent General Trochu, and as we had resolved on going by the Dieppe and Newhaven route, we betook ourselves to the Gare Saint Lazare at twelve o'clock on that day. There were not many travellers in the train, and of my four companions in my compartment, I must say there was but one who had not

a shamefaced air, and that individual was a civil engineer, instructed by the Provisional Government to go and look after the fortifications of Le Havre. The rest of us—I read it in the faces of my companions—all had a twinge of remorse at turning our backs at such a time on the city which had harboured us so long.

Nothing more than ordinary happened at our starting, until we reached the fortifications, when we all strained our necks out of windows to see how the railway had been flanked by new stone walls, and was ready to be banked up with earthworks at a moment's notice. The train moved slowly over the moat on a temporary wooden bridge, and then we passed into the military zone outside the fortifications, which was a desert of houses in ruins, and of heaps of bricks and mortar, as far as the eye could reach round the fortifications on either side. Such a scene of desolate ruin, made solely for a defensive purpose, has never, perhaps, been witnessed before. Further on we passed a military camp, with sentinels on guard. The soldiers looked not very trim, and had a sad, worn look, which the first tap of the drum, as it sounds the *pas de charge*, will, doubtless, change to one of better augury. The next two or three stations had loopholes for musketry cut into their side walls; then everything wore its usual air, and we fell into infinite talk about all the means of defence which the city could make use of, and which it had put in practice. This man had seen the big steel cannon dragged up to the top of Montmartre, with twenty-four horses to each cannon; that man declared that there were three million kilos of powder in the city, and Chassepots and tabatières enough for all its defenders; one argued about the fascines which were to be steeped in petroleum, and thrown into the moat, and set on fire wherever the Prussians should approach the ramparts; the other knew that half Paris was undermined to blow up the enemy if he should get on the walls, &c. Of all the four, the civil engineer, bound for Le Havre, was the most sober in talk, and the best informed; his idea was that the Prussians certainly would march upon Havre, and that the German plan assuredly was not to make close siege of Paris, but to block up all her communications, and to try to take her by famine, while they themselves made all the richest provinces of France contribute to their support. After a short time our journey became as monotonous as all railway journeys are. Country passen-

gers got in and out, and talked about market prices; women got into our carriage, and gossiped, just as if we were in a time of profound peace; and babies in the train screeched and squalled just as usual, for no apparent reason, except, perhaps, to assert that a baby's prerogative is to cry as much and when it pleases, to show its infantine sense of its autocracy and irresponsibility. The general tone of the provincials we met with was hearty and confident; they did not seem a whit discouraged by disaster; they counted on the defence of Paris as a means of bringing the German invasion to a standstill, while the provinces should have time to organise themselves, and throw armies in the rear of the invaders. The spirit of the inhabitants about Dieppe, which we reached in due course, was, we were told, excellent. The look, however, of many of the people whom we met about the streets and in the restaurants and cafés was by no means encouraging. The greater part of them were evidently refugees from Paris, and a blank, crestfallen air was their chief characteristic; they had fled from the duty and peril of defending the metropolis, and had evidently fallen terribly in their own esteem.

The afternoon had been dark and lowering, and towards night the rain fell in torrents. A pleasant night this to be prowling about Dieppe till three A.M., at which time the steamer was to start for New-haven. We resolved, therefore, after dining at one of the *table d'hôtes* of the town, and looking in at the *Café Suisse*, to go at once to the boat, and take our berth, and wait there calmly for the hour of starting. We walked, then, down the plashy quay, to the spot where the white funnel of the steamer loomed drearily through the rain, and descended the ladder from the quay on to the rain-sodden deck of the steamer.

But, alas! we had reckoned without our host, or rather the host of fugitives whom we found on board the boat. The chief cabin was so crammed with occupants, that not only was not a single berth unoccupied, but there was not sitting room even to be found on a single bench. A pleasant prospect to have to cross the Channel in a standing position, amid a host of refugees in every stage of sea-sickness, or to content ourselves with a cold seat open to the weather on the brass-bound stairs! The engineer had, we heard, just disposed of his cabin forwards for the small *douceur* of a sovereign, and this was the last available sleeping accommodation on board the boat. We departed then with bag and baggage moodily from the

boat, and determined to wait for another twenty-four hours for the next steamer. The next day (Thursday) was of brighter aspect; the sun shone out cheerfully in the morning, and we had the opportunity of studying the faces of refugees under a more propitious sky than the day before. Our feelings towards them, however, were slightly changed, for we now looked on each individual as a possible competitor in the struggle for berths which was sure to ensue long before three A.M. on the next day. Warned by experience, we went on board at ten P.M., and even at this time the steward looked upon himself as treating us with especial favour in finding us sitting room by the side of the saloon table, where he instructed us we might, when supper was over, lay our head on our arms on the mahogany, and try to sleep till the hour of starting. Five hours of sitting in this stifling and fetid atmosphere seemed to the jaunty steward rather a light and airy way of spending one's time. However, recalling to mind the bargain which had been struck with the engineer of the vessel of the previous night, we requested to be put into communication with that grimy dignitary. A bargain was soon made, and we were forthwith ensconced in a little den of our own, which was indeed a haven of peace, amid the wild fight for accommodation going on fore and aft throughout the boat. The whole cargo of passengers was about five or six hundred, and never since the boat was launched had she had to bear so miscellaneous and mournful a crowd.

There were people of every condition and every nation, though the French of course predominated; and women with tribes of children of all ages, from the babe at the breast to the child who was ceasing to be a child. There were Spaniards, Jews, Italians, Wallachs, Austrians, &c.; bankers' clerks, musicians, itinerant jugglers, actors and actresses, dealers in articles of virtù, photographers, idlers, and members of every imaginable trade and profession. On our emerging upon deck in the morning we found amid the crowd a face we recognised; close behind our friend stood two men in livery. This was M. —, of one of the leading banks in Paris, and the two men in livery were servants of the bank. The three had been sent over together to convey to London and place in security all the valuable papers of the bank—amounting to Heaven knows how many millions of francs; and from the jealous watch kept over bags and little boxes by many of the

passengers, one could well see that stores of jewels, trinkets, and valuables were being carried away from the impending fall of the Gallic Babylon, and one was irresistibly reminded of the flight of the multitude from Pompeii when the portentuous black cloud big with ruin was hanging over the terrified city.

Nevertheless, careworn and downcast as was every face, one noticed a temporary gleam of satisfaction come over it, when the foot was surely set on the peaceful soil of England. May all the sad-hearted immigrants find among us a kindly welcome, until they can return in security to their much-loved country, no longer profaned by the tread of the invader!

A LITTLE MORE PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY.

Non vale un acca—not worth an H—is a saying in Italy, where, to account for it, Baretti tells his readers, "We have no aspiration" and the "dronish letter" means exactly nothing at all.

Precisely the same meaning is with us, in England, when we say, Not worth a rap, and, although the idioms of the two nations do not run quite parallel here, they do run parallel in many proverbial instances. We say, for instance, One swallow does not make a summer. The Italians put it, Un fiore non fa primavera—one flower does not make a spring; and the force of both is made clearer by the contrasting. If the cap fits wear it, we English people say. Chi ha spaga, aggomitoli—he who has pack-thread may wind it, insinuates an Italian; varying it, at times, with a deeper cut still, to Chi è in difetto è in sospetto—he who is in fault is in fear. They who come late must kiss the cook, Baretti tells us was our wit, in his time, to tardy comers. Chi tarda arriva, male alloggia—a late arriver is lodged badly, is the corresponding whip to promote punctuality in Italy. To kill two birds with one stone is considered by us a masterpiece of completion. Batter due chiodi ad una calda—to strike, that is, forge, two nails at one heating, denotes the same cleverness to an Italian. Meddle with what concerns you, is a saying of ours that might be thought emblematic of only British caution and reserve. The same sentiment, however, prevails in impetuous Italy. Metter la falce nella biada altrui—put the scythe in other men's corn, is the version there; and so is, rhymingly,

Di quel che non ti cale,
Non dir nè ben nè male;

a very free translation of which might run:

On things that not to thee belong,
Utter no judgment, right or wrong.

The individual we call a meddlesome *Matty* is stigmatised as *Chi entra tra carne e ugnà*—one who gets in between the flesh and the nail; an indication of sharp, but petty annoyance, that has force enough decidedly. Short reckonings make long friends, is a vital item in English dealing. So it is of Italian. *Patto chiaro, amicizia lunga*, is the variation of it; a clear agreement, a long friendship. Another mercantile belief of ours is that we have one county in which we may expect sharper dealing than the rest. The Italians keep pace with us, even here. Tuscany is their sharp country, as Yorkshire is ours, and they say:

*Chi ha a fare con Tosco
Non vuol esser losco;*

which may be, as another specimen of free translation:

From a Tuscan would you buy?
Go not with a purblind eye!

Better a bird in hand than two in the bush, we say cautiously. *E meglio oggi l'uovo, che non domani la gallina*—better the egg to-day than the hen to-morrow, is the same wisdom with the Italians; and they have another reading of it in *Meglio è pincione in man, che tordo in frasca*—better a chaffinch in the hand than a thrush on the bough. Time works wonders, is English shortly expressed experience. *Col tempo e colla paglia si maturan le nespole*—with time and straw one may even ripen medlars, is said to impatient folks in Italy. Curses, like young chickens, come home to roost, says Lord Lytton in his *Lady of Lyons*. *Le bestemmie fanno come le processioni*—blasphemies do the same as processions, that is, come back again to the place whence they start, is an old saying in Italy, there being an older one still, corresponding to it, in Latin, *In proprium redeunt impia dicta caput*.

Great cry and little wool, is our comment when we find people over fussy; or we scoff at a mole-hill made into a mountain, or at much ado about nothing. The Italians kick at the infliction quite as angrily. *Ogni bruscolo ti pare una trave*—every straw-chip seems a plank to thee, they mutter; or *Fa d'una bolla un canchero*—make a water-blisther into a cancer. To carry coals to Newcastle, means to be guilty of unne-

cessary labour in collier England. The Italians have many ways of expressing the absurdity. *Dar l'incenso a' morti*—give incense to the dead, is one of them; *Lavar la testa all' asino*—wash a donkey's head, is another; *Preach to leeks*, is a third; a fourth is, *Sell sun in July*; and then there follow, *Mostrare altrui lucciole per lanterne*—show glowworms by lantern-light; *Gittar la treggia a' porci*—throw a sugar-plum to the pigs; *Fish for the proconsul* (whatever the sly meaning of that may be); *Make an almanack for the past year*; and *Pound water in a mortar*. Old birds are not caught with chaff, we declare. *Volpe vecchia non cade nella rete*—an old fox does not get into the snare, is the equally early version of the Italians. Every rose has a thorn, say we of rose-bearing England; and Every bean has its black; and No sweet without sweat; and, in another vein, *There is a skeleton in every house*. *Chi ha capre ha corna*—have a goat have a horn, has the same pictorial meaning in Italy; and so has *Non c'è mele senza le pecchie*—there is no honey without flies; and *Ognuno ha'l suo impiccato all' uscio*—every one has his rogue at the door. *Call a spade a spade*, is our way of expressing a preference for plain statements. *Chiama la gatta gatta*—call the cat cat, is the same idea expressed by an Italian. Every crow thinks her own young one white, is our acknowledgment of self-exaltation. In Italy it runs, *Ogni cencio vuol entrare in bucato*—every rag wishes to get into the wash-bucket.

To be hand-in-glove with one, is a mode we have of describing familiarity. The Italians say, *Esser di casa più che la granata*—to be more in the house than the broom is; they say, also, *To be as close as bread and cheese*. Fine feathers do not make fine birds, say we ornithologically; *Freno d'oro non fa miglior cavallo*—a golden bit does not make a better horse, is the richer dictum of the Italians, inherited, doubtless, direct from imperial and pagan Rome. To be between two stools, means with us to be in an unenviable situation; it used to run, to be between hawk and buzzard (when a clawing by one or the other would be inevitable); *Esser un cacio fra due grattugie*—to be the cheese between two graters, denotes the same miserable plight in Italy. The same graters (or presses, perhaps, would be a better word), furnish the Italians with another illustration. *Grattugia con grattugia non fa cacio*—press to press makes no

cheese, they say, dolefully or contemptuously, as the case may be; and an old English parallel to this was, Two half-moons will never make a bulwark. Blood is stronger than water, we feel still: the Italians change it to *Mi strigne più la camiscia che non la gonnella*—my shirt binds closer to me than my gown; an even more suggestive rendering of which, *Near* is my shirt, but nearer is my skin, used to be heard in England formerly. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks, has been repeated by us since the New Testament has been translated into our mother tongue; *Duro è scalcheggiare contra lo sprone*—it is severe (or painful) to jerk against the spur, is the more every-day allusion of the Italians. Do as you are bid, is scarcely a proverb with us, but it very often leaves our lips; *Legar l'asino dove vuole il padrone*—tie the ass where the master wishes, entails the same unquestioned obedience in Italy. Have two strings to your bow, we say, as a caution; *Tenere il piè in due staffe*—hold the foot in both stirrups, is the same good (albeit impossible) advice of an Italian. He is a jack-of-all-trades, we say of a person who can do most things handily; *E un uomo da bosco e da riviera*—he is a man of the woods and the river, denotes the same convertible utility in Italy. To count our chickens before they're hatched, is considered comical anticipation of good fortune in England; *Vender la pelle dell'orso*—to sell the skin of the bear, before, of course, you have shot at and effectually killed him, is laughed at as heartily in Italy. I have scotched the snake, we say here, when we are sure our work is over; *Ho fato il becco all'oca*—I have put the beak to the goose, is triumphed by an Italian. Every little helps, we say, when we are not over-particular as to our materials; *Ogni acqua immolla*—all water softens, or, *Ogni prun fa siepe*—any bramble-bush makes hedging, has the same meaning to an Italian. It's as broad as it's long, or six of one and half a dozen of the other, is our saying when we mean that two things will be pretty equal in the end; *Chi mura a secco, mura spesso*—who builds dry (that is, in the loose primitive way, without the expense of mortar) must build all the thicker, is the equivalent reflection of an Italian. Our, A close mouth catches no flies, is matched in Italy by *Che dorme non piglia pesce*—he who sleeps nets no fish. This is no time for trifling, said by us when we want to be in earnest, is

changed by an Italian into *Non e tempo di dar fieno a oche*—to-day is not the time to give hay to geese. 'Tis opportunity makes the thief, we say, as additional reason for locking up things securely; *All'arca aperta il giusto vi pecca*—at the open coffer even the just man sins, expresses the same belief of the Italians. A cat may look at a king, we say contemptuously, if we are reproved for a suspicion of insolence; *Un cane guarda un arcivescovo*—a dog may look at an archbishop, is the defiance of the ecclesiastic-ridden Italian. He has overrun the constable, was applied to a spendthrift in our debt-hating England; *Avanzare i piedi fuor del letto*—put the feet outside the bed, is the queer equivalent in Italy. He thought the streets would be paved with gold, denounces extravagant expectation here; *Le vigne vi si legano colle salsiccie*—vines are tied together at that place with sausages, is told to whomsoever is wise enough to believe it by an Italian. Hunger is the best sauce, we say, when we care not whether the coming dinner is roast beef or Scotch haggis; *Appetito non vuol salsa*—appetite wants no sauce, expresses the same eagerness in Italy. Then we say, *Half a loaf is better than no bread*, and the Italian agrees with us by saying, *A tempo di carestia pan veccioso*—in scarcity time vetch-mixed bread (which, naturally, would be despised after a bounteous harvest); and he calls a good appetite generally *Salsa di San Bernardo*—St. Bernard's sauce. It was like a wet blanket over us, we say, when some too ceremonious or unapt thing spoils our cheerfulness; *Ragionar de' morti a tavola*—to talk of the dead at table, complain out, under similar circumstances, the susceptible Italians. When the candles are out all cats are grey, or Joan in the dark is as good as my lady, is English, and smacks of mediæval times notably; *Ogni cuffia è buona per la notte*—any coif is good at night, is Italian, and marks the same period. If you're born to be hanged, you will never be drowned, is our questionable comforting; *Quello che ha ad esser de' lupi, non sarà mai de' cani*—What is meant to be wolf can never be dog, is similar philosophy of the Italians. If it doesn't go one way, it goes another, we say, when our substance is vanishing; *Quello che non va nelle maniche, va ne' gheroni*—what doesn't go into the sleeves goes into the gussets, is the rueful cry of an Italian. Talk of the devil, and he is sure to appear, we say irreverently; *E non*

si grida mai al lupo, che é non sia in paese—one never cries wolf, but he is out in the country, say the Italians. One good turn deserves another, is our way of recommending gratitude; Amore con amor si paga—love is paid by love, is the pretty equivalent of Italy. Chi ha arte, ha parte—he who has skill has estate, is said by the Italians, and it is doubtful whether there is any close English counterpart; and they say also (with significance that puzzles us until we consider it closely), Ognuno ha buona moglie e cattiv' arte—every one has a good wife but a poor business, to which again there does not seem to be an English parallel. But so many touches of nature have proved us all akin so often, that one or two little absences of this kind cannot sever us; and, indeed, we have but to go further on and further features strike us instantly with all the old resemblance. We find an equivalent, for instance, for our Born with a silver spoon in his mouth. The Italians call it *Nascer vestito*—to be born clothed. We find, too, that instead of trying to pacify a person with fair words, they give one another a hint to *Pascere di vento*—feed him with wind; and, instead of declaring such an one to be very two-faced, they say, *E più doppio d'una cipolla*—he is more double than an onion. Then a scowl is described by Italian malcontents as *Un viso di matrigna*—a mother-in-law's look (poor mothers-in-law enjoying their accustomed unpopularity under the shadows of the Apennines); and for having a man under their thumb, they say they have their hands in his hair (whence there must be small chance of escape, indeed!); and for being *tête-à-tête* with anybody they put it that they are *bocca a bocca*—mouth to mouth; whilst for throwing an insult in a person's face, they convey the same idea by declaring that they fling it at his *moustache*.

Of course it is not only from Italy that these picturesque suggestions can be drawn. They come from everywhere; for *Tanti paesi, tante usanze*—so many countries, so many customs, the people we have quoted truly and comprehensively say; but we are mindful of our readers' goodwill and patience, and we will not trench upon them any more. We are loth, however, to omit a short addendum from French proverbial lore. In that country, there are some sayings so pithy and so pretty, and so illustrative of those that have been familiar in our British mouths for centuries, it would be a pity to

leave them out. The first shall be, Every one has his hobby. This becomes, in French, *A chaque fou son marotte*—to every fool his bauble. Then, put the cart before the horse, is (very descriptively, and with a sharp reminiscence of Rosa Bonheur) *Mettre la charrue devant les bœufs*—put the plough before the oxen. Let well alone, is developed figuratively (and perhaps so figuratively some may dispute the application) into *N'éveillez pas le chat qui dort*—don't wake the sleeping cat. Birds of a feather flock together, is widened out into *Qui se ressemble, s'assemble*. Teach your grandmother to suck eggs, becomes, *C'est Gros Jean qui en remontre à son curé*—it is Hodge (let us say) instilling theology into his rector; and it is very effective with such a reading. Possession is nine points of the law, is turned into, or has been turned by us, from *La raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure*—the judgment of the strongest is always the best. Civility costs nothing, becomes, more bitingly, *Bien parler n'ecorche la langue*—to speak well does not flay the tongue. No song, no supper, or, as it was with us formerly under papal authority, No penny, no paternoster, wears the form with martial allusion enough, *Point d'argent, point de Suisse*—no money, no Swiss-guard. Fore-warned, fore-armed, is, again keeping to the military, *Un averti en vaut deux*—one cautioned man is worth two. A whet is no let (that is, hindrance), is, *Ou ne perd point de temps quand on aiguisse ses outils*—one loses no time when sharpening tools; and though the French gives significance to the English that at first would not be perceived, the peculiar power of our language to express much by little is in this well exemplified. The English, You can't make a silk purse from a sow's ear, is in French, *On ne saurait faire d'une buse un épervier*—you cannot make a sparrow hawk from a buzzard. Cut your coat according to your cloth, is altered into *Selon ta bourse, gouverne ta bouche*—according to thy purse, govern thy mouth; and a hint at fitting modesty is very well given by it. A man who does not do this, but is improvident, is said, *Manger son blé en herbe*—to eat his wheat while growing; and one who opens his mouth too widely another way, who is, in short, what we call a braggart, is laughed at for making *Une longue litanie de ses exploits*. Another mode of exaggeration—the mountain and mole-hill metamorphosis—is *Faire d'une mouche un éléphant*—to

make a fly into an elephant; and whether from novelty or simplicity, it seems to hit the target with a much neater arrow. A cursed cur must be tied short, we do not hear now, though it is close kin to Give a dog a bad name and you may as well hang him; *Mechant chien, court lien*, does the whole thing in a twinkling across the Channel. Daub yourself with honey, you'll never want flies, obsolete also with us, remains still, *Qui se fait brébis le loup le mange*, and is prettily varied in the French fable, where the bee scolds Chloe for having lips so like a rose, he stung her because he couldn't help it. A stitch in time saves nine, is rendered, *Un point sauve cent*; and perhaps this immense proverbial percentage has had its proper effect on French women, and accounts for their charming toilettes and nattiness. To sow one's wild oats, is, oddly and inexplicably enough, *Rotér le balai*—to roast the broom. Anything for a shift, becomes *Faire de tout bois flèche*—Make an arrow of any wood, an illustration as old as the battles of Agincourt and Crécy certainly, if not still older. Lightly come lightly go, has in France a pretty martial wording, that calls up a whole scene, *Ce qui vient par la flûte s'en retourne par le tambour*. He has gone to his long home is, in French, *S'en aller au pays des taupes*, the mole country being oblique for "in the earth," or "under the sod." They cannot set their horses' heads together, is, musically again, *Ils ne sauraient accorder leurs flûtes*. There is more in that than meets the eye, is, *Il y a quelque anguille sous roche*. For setting our arms a-kimbo, our neighbours say they make themselves into pots with two handles. For, I am ruined, I am undone, they say I am hit in the wing; such a calamity to the Cock of Gaul being, of course, irremediable. For the "ducking" given to a new voyager in crossing the line, they say, Give such an one baptême. For a garment fitting badly in wrinkles, they say, This coat makes grimaces, and they surely hit the fact so hard there, it will be harder still not to think of it when, henceforth, the ugliness is brought to our notice. For the old maid's piece, as we sometimes call it now, or, Manners in the dish, as it was formerly, they say, *Le morceau honteux*. They call spare time, *Heures perdues*; a donkey is, with them, not a Jerusalem pony, but an Arcadian nightingale; to stand trifling, they say is (triflingly enough!) to amuse oneself with the mustard; and they bring mustard again into requisition, when, to

put sugar into it, means to take off the sharp edge of what we say.

This is nothing like a complete catalogue of these strange likenesses. It is scarcely a beginning. But we must not overtax the reader's patience, and for the present, at least, these examples are all that considerations of space permit us to present.

THE VISION OF TOM CHUFF.

AT the edge of melancholy Catstea Moor, in the north of England, with half a dozen ancient poplar-trees with rugged and hoary stems around, one smashed across the middle by a flash of lightning thirty summers before, and all by their great height dwarfing the abode near which they stand, there squats a rude stone house, with a thick chimney, a kitchen and bedroom on the ground-floor, and a loft, accessible by a ladder, under the shingle roof, divided into two rooms.

Its owner was a man of ill repute. Tom Chuff was his name. A shock-headed, broad-shouldered, powerful man, though somewhat short, with lowering brows and a sullen eye. He was a poacher, and hardly made an ostensible pretence of earning his bread by any honest industry. He was a drunkard. He beat his wife, and led his children a life of terror and lamentation, when he was at home. It was a blessing to his frightened little family when he absented himself, as he sometimes did, for a week or more together.

On the night I speak of he knocked at the door with his cudgel at about eight o'clock. It was winter, and the night was very dark. Had the summons been that of a bogie from the moor, the inmates of this small house could hardly have heard it with greater terror.

His wife unbarred the door in fear and haste. Her hunchbacked sister stood by the hearth, staring toward the threshold. The children cowered behind.

Tom Chuff entered with his cudgel in his hand, without speaking, and threw himself into a chair opposite the fire. He had been away two or three days. He looked haggard, and his eyes were bloodshot. They knew he had been drinking.

Tom raked and knocked the peat fire with his stick, and thrust his feet close to it. He signed toward the little dresser, and nodded at his wife, and she knew he wanted a cup, which in silence she gave him. He pulled a bottle of gin from his

coat-pocket, and nearly filling the teacup, drank off the dram at a few gulps.

He usually refreshed himself with two or three drams of this kind before beating the inmates of his house. His three little children, cowering in a corner, eyed him from under a table, as Jack did the ogre in the nursery tale. His wife, Nell, standing behind a chair, which she was ready to snatch up to meet the blow of the cudgel, which might be levelled at her at any moment, never took her eyes off him; and hunchbacked Mary showed the whites of a large pair of eyes, similarly employed, as she stood against the oaken press, her dark face hardly distinguishable in the distance from the brown panel behind it.

Tom Chuff was at his third dram, and had not yet spoken a word since his entrance, and the suspense was growing dreadful, when, on a sudden, he leaned back in his rude seat, the cudgel slipped from his hand, a change and a death-like pallor came over his face.

For a while they all stared on; such was their fear of him, they dared not speak or move, lest it should prove to have been but a doze, and Tom should wake up and proceed forthwith to gratify his temper and exercise his cudgel.

In a very little time, however, things began to look so odd, that they ventured, his wife and Mary, to exchange glances full of doubt and wonder. He hung so much over the side of the chair, that if it had not been one of cyclopean clumsiness and weight, he would have borne it to the floor. A leaden tint was darkening the pallor of his face. They were becoming alarmed, and finally braving everything, his wife timidly said, "Tom!" and then more sharply repeated it, and finally cried the appellative loudly, and again and again, with the terrified accompaniment, "He's dying—he's dying!" her voice rising to a scream, as she found that neither it nor her plucks and shakings of him by the shoulder had the slightest effect in recalling him from his torpor.

And now from sheer terror of a new kind the children added their shrilly piping to the talk and cries of their seniors; and if anything could have called Tom up from his lethargy, it might have been the piercing chorus that made the rude chamber of the poacher's habitation ring again. But Tom continued unmoved, deaf, and stirless.

His wife sent Mary down to the village, hardly a quarter of a mile away, to implore of the doctor, for whose family she did

duty as laundress, to come down and look at her husband, who seemed to be dying.

The doctor, who was a good-natured fellow, arrived. With his hat still on, he looked at Tom, examined him, and when he found that the emetic he had brought with him, on conjecture from Mary's description, did not act, and that his lancet brought no blood, and that he felt a pulseless wrist, he shook his head, and inwardly thought:

"What the plague is the woman crying for? Could she have desired a greater blessing for her children and herself than the very thing that has happened?"

Tom, in fact, seemed quite gone. At his lips no breath was perceptible. The doctor could discover no pulse. His hands and feet were cold, and the chill was stealing up into his body.

The doctor, after a stay of twenty minutes, had buttoned up his great-coat again and pulled down his hat, and told Mrs. Chuff that there was no use in his remaining there any longer, when, all of a sudden, a little rill of blood began to trickle from the lancet-cut in Tom Chuff's temple.

"That's very odd," said the doctor. "Let us wait a little."

I must describe now the sensations which Tom Chuff had experienced.

With his elbows on his knees, and his chin upon his hands, he was staring into the embers, with his gin beside him, when suddenly a swimming came in his head, he lost sight of the fire, and a sound like one stroke of a loud church bell smote his brain.

Then he heard a confused humming, and the leaden weight of his head held him backward as he sank in his chair, and consciousness quite forsook him.

When he came to himself he felt chilled, and was leaning against a huge leafless tree. The night was moonless, and when he looked up he thought he had never seen stars so large and bright, or sky so black. The stars, too, seemed to blink down with longer intervals of darkness, and fiercer and more dazzling emergence, and something, he vaguely thought, of the character of silent menace and fury.

He had a confused recollection of having come there, or rather of having been carried along, as if on men's shoulders, with a sort of rushing motion. But it was utterly indistinct; the imperfect recollection simply of a sensation. He had seen or heard nothing on his way.

He looked round. There was not a sign

of a living creature near. And he began with a sense of awe to recognise the place.

The tree against which he had been leaning was one of the noble old beeches that surround at irregular intervals the churchyard of Shackleton, which spreads its green and wavy lap on the edge of the Moor of Catstean, at the opposite side of which stands the rude cottage in which he had just lost his consciousness. It was six miles or more across the moor to his habitation, and the black expanse lay before him, disappearing dismally in the darkness. So that, looking straight before him, sky and land blended together in an undistinguishable and awful blank.

There was a silence quite unnatural over the place. The distant murmur of the brook, which he knew so well, was dead; not a whisper in the leaves above him; the air, earth, everything about and above was indescribably still; and he experienced that quaking of the heart that seems to portend the approach of something awful. He would have set out upon his return across the moor, had he not an undefined presentiment that he was waylaid by something he dared not pass.

The old grey church and tower of Shackleton stood like a shadow in the rear. His eye had grown accustomed to the obscurity, and he could just trace its outline. There were no comforting associations in his mind connected with it; nothing but menace and misgiving. His early training in his lawless calling was connected with this very spot. Here his father used to meet two other poachers, and bring his son, then but a boy, with him.

Under the church porch, towards morning, they used to divide the game they had taken, and take account of the sales they had made on the previous day, and make partition of the money, and drink their gin. It was here he had taken his early lessons in drinking, cursing, and lawlessness. His father's grave was hardly eight steps from the spot where he stood. In his present state of awful dejection, no scene on earth could have so helped to heighten his fear.

There was one object close by which added to his gloom. About a yard away, in rear of the tree, behind himself, and extending to his left, was an open grave, the mould and rubbish piled on the other side. At the head of this grave stood the beech-tree; its columnar stem rose like a huge monumental pillar. He knew every line and crease on its smooth surface. The

initial letters of his own name, cut in its bark long ago, had spread and wrinkled like the grotesque capitals of a fanciful engraver, and now with a sinister significance overlooked the open grave, as if answering his mental question, "Who for is t' grave cut?"

He felt still a little stunned, and there was a faint tremor in his joints that disinclined him to exert himself; and, further, he had a vague apprehension that take what direction he might, there was danger around him worse than that of staying where he was.

On a sudden the stars began to blink more fiercely, a faint wild light overspread for a minute the bleak landscape, and he saw approaching from the moor a figure at a kind of swinging trot, with now and then a zigzag hop or two, such as men accustomed to cross such places make, to avoid the patches of slob or quag that meet them here and there. This figure resembled his father's, and, like him, whistled through his finger by way of signal as he approached; but the whistle sounded not now shrilly and sharp, as in old times, but immensely far away, and seemed to sing strangely through Tom's head. From habit or from fear, in answer to the signal, Tom whistled as he used to do five-and-twenty years ago and more, although he was already chilled with an unearthly fear.

Like his father, too, the figure held up the bag that was in his left hand as he drew near, when it was his custom to call out to him what was in it. It did not reassure the watcher, you may be certain, when a shout unnaturally faint reached him, as the phantom dangled the bag in the air, and he heard with a faint distinctness the words, "Tom Chuff's soul!"

Scarcely fifty yards away from the low churchyard fence at which Tom was standing, there was a wider chasm in the peat, which there threw up a growth of reeds and bulrushes, among which, as the old poacher used to do on a sudden alarm, the approaching figure suddenly cast itself down.

From the same patch of tall reeds and rushes emerged instantaneously what he at first mistook for the same figure creeping on all-fours, but what he soon perceived to be an enormous black dog with a rough coat like a bear's, which at first sniffed about, and then started towards him in what seemed to be a sportive amble, bouncing this way and that, but as it drew near it displayed a pair of fearful eyes that

glowed like live coals, and emitted from the monstrous expanse of its jaws a terrifying growl.

This beast seemed on the point of seizing him, and Tom recoiled in panic and fell into the open grave behind him. The edge which he caught as he tumbled gave way, and down he went, expecting almost at the same instant to reach the bottom. But never was such a fall! Bottomless seemed the abyss! Down, down, down, with immeasurable and still increasing speed, through utter darkness, with hair streaming straight upward, breathless, he shot with a rush of air against him, the force of which whirled up his very arms, second after second, minute after minute, through the chasm downward he flew, the icy perspiration of horror covering his body, and suddenly, as he expected to be dashed into annihilation, his descent was in an instant arrested with a tremendous shock, which, however, did not deprive him of consciousness even for a moment.

He looked about him. The place resembled a smoke-stained cavern or catacomb, the roof of which, except for a ribbed arch here and there faintly visible, was lost in darkness. From several rude passages, like the galleries of a gigantic mine, which opened from this centre chamber, was very dimly emitted a dull glow as of charcoal, which was the only light by which he could imperfectly discern the objects immediately about him.

What seemed like a projecting piece of the rock, at the corner of one of these murky entrances, moved on a sudden, and proved to be a human figure, that beckoned to him. He approached, and saw his father. He could barely recognise him, he was so monstrously altered.

"I've been looking for you, Tom. Welcome home, lad; come along to your place."

Tom's heart sank as he heard these words, which were spoken in a hollow and, he thought, derisive voice that made him tremble. But he could not help accompanying the wicked spirit, who led him into a place, in passing which he heard, as it were from within the rock, dreadful cries and appeals for mercy.

"What is this?" said he.

"Never mind."

"Who are they?"

"New-comers, like yourself, lad," answered his father, apathetically. "They give over that work in time, finding it is no use."

"What shall I do?" said Tom, in an agony.

"It's all one."

"But what shall I do?" reiterated Tom, quivering in every joint and nerve.

"Grin and bear it, I suppose."

"For God's sake, if ever you cared for me, as I am your own child, let me out of this!"

"There's no way out."

"If there's a way in there's a way out, and for Heaven's sake let me out of this."

But the dreadful figure made no further answer, and glided backwards by his shoulder to the rear; and others appeared in view, each with a faint red halo round it, staring on him with frightful eyes, images, all in hideous variety, of eternal fury or derision. He was growing mad, it seemed, under the stare of so many eyes, increasing in number and drawing closer every moment, and at the same time myriads and myriads of voices were calling him by his name, some far away, some near, some from one point, some from another, some from behind, close to his ears. These cries were increased in rapidity and multitude, and mingled with laughter, with flitting blasphemies, with broken insults and mockeries, succeeded and obliterated by others, before he could half catch their meaning.

All this time, in proportion to the rapidity and urgency of these dreadful sights and sounds, the epilepsy of terror was creeping up to his brain, and with a long and dreadful scream he lost consciousness:

When he recovered his senses, he found himself in a small stone chamber, vaulted above, and with a ponderous door. A single point of light in the wall, with a strange brilliancy illuminated this cell.

Seated opposite to him was a venerable man with a snowy beard of immense length; an image of awful purity and severity. He was dressed in a coarse robe, with three large keys suspended from his girdle. He might have filled one's idea of an ancient porter of a city gate; such spiritual cities, I should say, as John Bunyan loved to describe.

This old man's eyes were brilliant and awful, and fixed on him as they were, Tom Chuff felt himself helplessly in his power. At length he spoke:

"The command is given to let you forth for one trial more. But if you are found again drinking with the drunken, and beating your fellow-servants, you shall

return through the door by which you came, and go out no more."

With these words the old man took him by the wrist and led him through the first door, and then unlocking one that stood in the cavern outside, he struck Tom Chuff sharply on the shoulder, and the door shut behind him with a sound that boomed peal after peal of thunder near and far away, and all round and above, till it rolled off gradually into silence. It was totally dark, but there was a fanning of fresh cool air that overpowered him. He felt that he was in the upper world again.

In a few minutes he began to hear voices which he knew, and first a faint point of light appeared before his eyes, and gradually he saw the flame of the candle, and, after that, the familiar faces of his wife and children, and he heard them faintly when they spoke to him, although he was as yet unable to answer.

He also saw the doctor, like an isolated figure in the dark, and heard him say:

"There now, you have him back. He'll do, I think."

His first words, when he could speak and saw clearly all about him, and felt the blood on his neck and shirt, were:

"Wife, forgie me. I'm a changed man. Send for t' sir."

Which last phrase means, "Send for the clergyman."

When the vicar came and entered the little bedroom where the scared poacher, whose soul had died within him, was lying, still sick and weak, in his bed, and with a spirit that was prostrate with terror, Tom Chuff feebly beckoned the rest from the room, and, the door being closed, the good parson heard the strange confession, and with equal amazement the man's earnest and agitated vows of amendment, and his helpless appeals to him for support and counsel.

These, of course, were kindly met; and the visits of the rector, for some time, were frequent.

One day, when he took Tom Chuff's hand on bidding him good-bye, the sick man held it still, and said:

"Ye'r vicar o' Shackleton, sir, and if I sud dee, ye'll promise me a'e thing, as I a promised ye a many. I a said I'll never gie wife, nor barn, nor folk o' no sort, skelp nor sizzup more, and ye'll know o' me no more among the sipers. Nor never will Tom draw trigger, nor set a snare again, but in an honest way, and after that ye'll no make it a bootless bene for me,

but bein', as I say, vicar o' Shackleton, and able to do as ye list, ye'll no let them bury me within twenty good yerd-wands measure o' the a'd beech trees that's round the churchyard of Shackleton."

"I see; you would have your grave, when your time really comes, a good way from the place where lay the grave you dreamed of."

"That's jest it. I'd lie at the bottom o' a marl-pit liefer! And I'd be laid in anither churchyard just to be shut o' my fear o' that, but that a' my kinsfolk is buried beyond in Shackleton, and ye'll gie me yer promise, and no break yer word."

"I do promise, certainly. I'm not likely to outlive you; but if I should, and still be vicar of Shackleton, you shall be buried somewhere as near the middle of the churchyard as we can find space."

"That'll do."

And so content, they parted.

The effect of the vision upon Tom Chuff was powerful, and promised to be lasting. With a sore effort he exchanged his life of desultory adventure and comparative idleness for one of regular industry. He gave up drinking; he was as kind as an originally surly nature would allow to his wife and family; he went to church; in fine weather they crossed the moor to Shackleton Church; the vicar said he came there to look at the scenery of his vision, and to fortify his good resolutions by the reminder.

Impressions upon the imagination, however, are but transitory, and a bad man acting under fear is not a free agent; his real character does not appear. But as the images of the imagination fade, and the action of fear abates, the essential qualities of the man reassert themselves.

So, after a time, Tom Chuff began to grow weary of his new life; he grew lazy, and people began to say that he was catching hares, and pursuing his old contraband way of life, under the rose.

He came home one hard night, with signs of the bottle in his thick speech and violent temper. Next day he was sorry, or frightened, at all events repentant, and for a week or more something of the old horror returned, and he was once more on his good behaviour. But in a little time came a relapse, and another repentance, and then a relapse again, and gradually the return of old habits and the flooding in of all his old way of life, with more violence and gloom, in proportion as the man was alarmed and exasperated by the re-

membrance of his despised, but terrible, warning.

With the old life returned the misery of the cottage. The smiles, which had begun to appear with the unwonted sunshine, were seen no more. Instead, returned to his poor wife's face the old pale and heart-broken look. The cottage lost its neat and cheerful air, and the melancholy of neglect was visible. Sometimes at night were overheard, by a chance passer-by, cries and sobs from that ill-omened dwelling. Tom Chuff was now often drunk, and not very often at home, except when he came in to sweep away his poor wife's earnings.

Tom had long lost sight of the honest old parson. There was shame mixed with his degradation. He had grace enough left when he saw the thin figure of "t' sir" walking along the road to turn out of his way and avoid meeting him. The clergyman shook his head, and sometimes groaned, when his name was mentioned. His horror and regret were more for the poor wife than for the relapsed sinner, for her case was pitiable indeed.

Her brother, Jack Everton, came over from Hexley, having heard stories of all this, determined to beat Tom, for his ill-treatment of his sister, within an inch of his life. Luckily, perhaps, for all concerned, Tom happened to be away upon one of his long excursions, and poor Nell besought her brother, in extremity of terror, not to interpose between them. So he took his leave and went home muttering and sulky.

Now it happened a few months later that Nelly Chuff fell sick. She had been ailing, as heart-broken people do, for a good while. But now the end had come.

There was a coroner's inquest when she died, for the doctor had doubts as to whether a blow had not, at least, hastened her death. Nothing certain, however, came of the inquiry. Tom Chuff had left his home more than two days before his wife's death. He was absent upon his lawless business still when the coroner had held his quest.

Jack Everton came over from Hexley to attend the dismal obsequies of his sister. He was more incensed than ever with the wicked husband who, one way or other, had hastened Nelly's death. The inquest had closed early in the day. The husband had not appeared.

An occasional companion—perhaps I ought to say accomplice—of Chuff's happened to turn up. He had left him on the borders of Westmoreland, and said he

would probably be home next day. But Everton affected not to believe it. Perhaps it was to Tom Chuff, he suggested, a secret satisfaction to crown the history of his bad married life with the scandal of his absence from the funeral of his neglected and abused wife.

Everton had taken on himself the direction of the melancholy preparations. He had ordered a grave to be opened for his sister beside her mother's, in Shackleton churchyard, at the other side of the moor. For the purpose, as I have said, of marking the callous neglect of her husband, he determined that the funeral should take place that night. His brother Dick had accompanied him, and they and his sister, with Mary and the children, and a couple of the neighbours, formed the humble cortège.

Jack Everton said he would wait behind, on the chance of Tom Chuff's coming in time, that he might tell him what had happened, and make him cross the moor with him to meet the funeral. His real object, I think, was to inflict upon the villain the drubbing he had so long wished to give him. Any how, he was resolved, by crossing the moor, to reach the churchyard in time to anticipate the arrival of the funeral, and to have a few words with the vicar, clerk, and sexton, all old friends of his, for the parish of Shackleton was the place of his birth and early recollections.

But Tom Chuff did not appear at his house that night. In surly mood, and without a shilling in his pocket, he was making his way homeward. His bottle of gin, his last investment, half emptied, was, with its neck protruding, as usual on such returns, in his coat-pocket.

His way home lay across the moor of Catsteane, and the point at which he best knew the passage was from the churchyard of Shackleton. He vaulted the low wall that forms its boundary, and strode across the graves, and over many a flat, half-buried tombstone, toward the side of the churchyard next Catsteane Moor.

The old church of Shackleton and its tower rose, close at his right, like a black shadow against the sky. It was a moonless night, but clear. By this time he had reached the low boundary wall, at the other side, that overlooks the wide expanse of Catsteane Moor. He stood by one of the huge old beech trees, and leaned his back to its smooth trunk. Had he ever seen the sky look so black, and the stars shine out and blink so vividly? There was a deathlike silence over the scene, like the

hush that precedes thunder in sultry weather. The expanse before him was lost in utter blackness. A strange quaking unnerved his heart. It was the sky and scenery of his vision! The same horror and misgiving! The same invincible fear of venturing from the spot where he stood. He would have prayed if he dared. His sinking heart demanded a restorative of some sort, and he grasped the bottle in his coat-pocket. Turning to his left, as he did so, he saw the piled-up mould of an open grave, that gaped with its head close to the base of the great tree against which he was leaning.

He stood aghast. His dream was returning and slowly enveloping him. Everything he saw was weaving itself into the texture of his vision. The chill of horror stole over him.

A faint whistle came shrill and clear over the moor, and he saw a figure approaching at a swinging trot, with a zigzag course, hopping now here and now there, as men do over a surface where one has need to choose their steps. Through the jungle of reeds and bulrushes in the foreground this figure advanced; and with the same unaccountable impulse that had coerced him in his dream, he answered the whistle of the advancing figure.

On that signal it directed its course straight toward him. It mounted the low wall, and, standing there, looked into the graveyard.

"Who med answer?" challenged the new comer from his post of observation.

"Me," answered Tom.

"Who are you?" repeated the man upon the wall.

"Tom Chuff; and who's this grave cut for?" He answered in a savage tone, to cover the secret shudder of his panic.

"I'll tell you that, ye villain!" answered the stranger, descending from the wall. "I a' looked for you far and near, and waited long, and now you're found at last."

Not knowing what to make of the figure that advanced upon him, Tom Chuff recoiled, stumbled, and fell backward into the open grave. He caught at the sides as he fell, but without retarding his fall.

An hour after, when lights came with the coffin, the corpse of Tom Chuff was found at the bottom of the grave. He had fallen direct upon his head, and his neck was broken. His death must have been simultaneous with his fall. Thus far his dream was accomplished.

It was his brother-in-law who had crossed the moor and approached the churchyard of Shackleton, exactly in the line which the image of his father had seemed to take in his strange vision. Fortunately for Jack Everton, the sexton and clerk of Shackleton church were unseen by him crossing the churchyard toward the grave of Nelly Chuff, just as Tom the poacher stumbled and fell. Suspicion of direct violence would otherwise have inevitably attached to the exasperated brother. As it was, the catastrophe was followed by no legal consequences.

The good vicar kept his word, and the grave of Tom Chuff is still pointed out by old inhabitants of Shackleton pretty nearly in the centre of the churchyard. This conscientious compliance with the entreaty of the panic-stricken man as to the place of his sepulture gave a horrible and mocking emphasis to the strange combination by which fate had defeated his precaution, and fixed the place of his death.

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